



A Versatile Acoustic DI Box

The RMI Acouswitch IQ DI is built tough but with many refinements inside

BY DOUG YOUNG

AT A GLANCE

ACOUSWITCH

THE SPECS

Weight: 3 lbs.

Dimensions:

6.3 x 8.6 x 1.6 inches.

Runs on 9-20 volts

(power unit not supplied)

Frequency range: 50 Hz (low cut filter)—100 kHz (+/- 0.2 dB).

Signal-to-noise ratio: -92 dB @ 1kHz, 0dBu (A weighted)

Input impedance: 5 MOhm

Output impedance: 150 Ohm

EQ: +/- 18dB at 83 Hz (bass), 100 Hz–6 kHz (mid), 12.5 kHz (treble)

Body Contour: -24dB notch filter, 45 Hz–500 Hz

Effect loops: 2

PRICE

\$799 list/\$599 street

Made in Germany

Rmi.lu

Planning your amplified setup can present a challenge. You can keep things simple, and just plug directly into an amp. But as soon as you want to plug into a PA system, add effects or EQ, use a second pickup, or even switch between instruments, things begin to get more complex. The Acouswitch IQ DI from Rupert Musical Instruments (RMI) in Luxembourg is a preamp with extensive input, output, EQ, and routing options that allow it to act as command central for more complex amplified setups, making it easier to connect various effects, switch between instruments, and route your signal to amps and PAs.

The Acouswitch offers a full complement of features—some expected, others fairly unique. The form factor itself is distinctive, the slim 6 x 8.5-inch box measures only 1½ inches high, and all knobs are recessed rollers, which results in an extremely low profile. The unit offers two inputs that can be used simultaneously or selected via an A/B switch, a DI balanced out, unbalanced line out, and tuner out. The Acouswitch also provides two effects loops, one serial, and another foot-switchable parallel loop with the ability to control the mix. Foot switches, with matching indicator LEDs, also provide a mute function, adjustable boost, and the A/B switching.

In spite of the two inputs, the Acouswitch provides a single preamp channel. When used in dual-input mode, the preamp applies only to input A. Channel B is buffered, but not amplified, and is unaffected by volume or EQ settings (mute, boost, and Body Contour controls do

apply). If nothing is plugged into B, then the A/B switch can be used to select the preamp/EQ path, the mostly unprocessed B path.

The Acouswitch offers a powerful EQ section with bass, treble, a semi-parametric midrange and a pair of “Body Contour” controls that have a dual mode—they can act like a narrow notch filter or as a low variable-frequency midrange boost that can warm up your sound. The controls can be daunting. The labels are a bit obtuse, and the recessed thumbwheels would be hard to change quickly during a performance, although they do have the benefit of being unlikely to get knocked around and changed by accident.

RMI describes the preamp as “studio quality” and in practice the unit does sound exceptionally clean and clear. The EQ section is especially effective, and I appreciated the +/-18dB of adjustment, as well the flexibility of the semi-parametric midrange controls. The fixed EQ frequencies are well chosen, and the unit gives you a lot of options for sculpting your sound.

The Acouswitch is a powerful well-thought-out device. It has enough complexity that you'll want to keep the manual handy until you decide how to take advantage of its various features and routing options. I've only touched on a few of its many features here, but it can also be used as a line mixer.

If you're looking for a high-quality, diverse preamp/DI that's built like a tank and provides enough features to serve as the central routing hub of almost any acoustic setup, the Acouswitch just might fit the bill.

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